

# HOMES FOR WORKERS

IN PLANNED COMMUNITIES  
THRU COLLECTIVE ACTION



INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE  
AIRCRAFT AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS  
OF AMERICA (UAW-CIO)

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INTERNATIONAL UNION, UNITED AUTOMOBILE,  
AIRCRAFT AND AGRICULTURAL IMPLEMENT WORKERS  
OF AMERICA (UAW-CIO), 411 WEST MILWAUKEE,  
DETROIT, MICH.

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OFFICE OF THE VICE PRESIDENT  
WASHINGTON

September 2, 1943

Mr. George A. Addes, Secretary-Treasurer  
United Automobile Workers, CIO  
411 West Milwaukee  
Detroit, Michigan

Dear Mr. Addes:

Thank you for sending me a copy of Homes for Workers in Planned Communities through Collective Action. I am glad to know that the UAW-CIO is giving serious thought to the problem of improving the standard of living of workers, and taking the lead in planning homes where children may have the great benefits of sunlight, fresh air, gardens, and playgrounds. I congratulate you upon the splendid start you have made, and I hope that the time will speedily come when all families who work in the cities will enjoy the benefits of good housing.

Sincerely yours,

*H A Wallace*

H. A. Wallace

## FOREWORD

Shelter is one of the essentials of human existence. From 20% to 25% of the worker's income is required to provide his family with housing that is very little more than mere shelter. There is no need to elaborate here on the present housing situation, other than to point out that these conditions are not a result of the war, but are of very long standing and have only been dramatized by the war effort. For no other necessity do you have to pay so much and get so little in return as you do for housing. **Just as long as we permit the real estate, speculative building and allied interests to exploit the worker's need for shelter we can expect nothing better.**

The UAW-CIO since its inception has taken an active interest in the problem of providing housing for its membership. Our Union, from the start of the defense program, recognized that the problem of housing for war workers would become increasingly critical and for this reason established a UAW-CIO International Housing Department. In further recognition of the relation of housing to war production, the Housing Department was made one of the most important responsibilities of the International War Policy Division.

This booklet is being published in the interests of a very large body of Union members who want to own their own homes and who would like to take whatever steps are necessary to enable them to realize their hopes as soon after the end of the war as possible. **All Locals that have not already done so are strongly urged to establish Housing Committees as quickly as they can, to concern themselves with the problem of housing in all of its phases.** The problem is large, has become very involved, and will need much careful analysis if we are to eliminate past evils and create a healthier, sounder living environment for the future. Your officers in the International will gladly help you with the solution of your problems but **the basis for action must start with the rank and file of the membership. As is pointed out in this booklet, not until the workers themselves take a hand in the solution of the housing problem will any real progress be made.**

Thousands of pamphlets, magazines, and newspapers have published discussions on slum clearance, subsidized housing, housing for unemployment relief, public housing, defense housing, war housing, temporary housing, demountable housing, prefabricated housing, and rental housing. The net result of the varied, often contradictory, and nearly always misleading statements,

to the man on the street is to add to his confusion and to befuddle the main issues. Certainly, judging by the results achieved to date, if all of these agencies were scrapped the housing situation would not be much worse than it is now. No amount of official whitewash can cover up the fact that the housebuilding industry, inefficient and backward as it is in peace time, has now broken down completely and is unable to make its proper contribution to the war effort.

Most home purchasers in the past have made bad buys. A purchaser can buy only the best house that is being offered by builders at a price within his reach. He can buy nothing better. So if all the builders in a neighborhood are offering stupid houses for sale then that is the kind of a house the prospect buys. To make the cycle complete the speculative builder who prides himself on being a practical business man considers actual sales as the best indication of what the public wants, and so he continues to build stupid houses. For that reason, now after twenty years of building activity following World War No. 1, **housing is still technically, economically, and socially, one of the most backward fields in the United States.** The speculative builder never has concerned himself with building in planned communities. In building houses he has con-

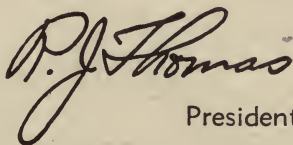
cerned himself chiefly with selling gadgets. His chief aim has been to "get out from under" with each sale and so to leave the home buyer "holding the bag." It is intended that this booklet shall serve the UAW member who is a prospective home owner in two ways:

1. To outline a method by which the ownership of homes in well **planned communities** can be made possible for UAW-CIO members through **collective action**.
2. To establish healthy living standards and not just "minimum requirements" by which the purchase of a home may be judged by the individual who is interested in home ownership.

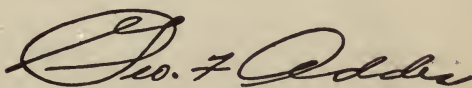
Although what we are proposing is comparatively new in this country it has already been done abroad. In fact, housing reform and actual accomplishment came in Europe after the last war only in those countries where the trade unions took a strong stand in demanding decent housing and were not satisfied with a few isolated slum clearance projects. The more active was their interest the greater was the building of decent houses for them and their families. **The lack of such demand here is the principal reason for the failure to accomplish anything worth while in this country.** We are fully aware of the many obstacles to be overcome before progressive



action can be taken. However, when the demand is established and is insistent enough, obstacles will melt away. We are not interested in housing for the purpose of bailing out high land values or of preserving the interests either of real estate operators or of speculative builders. We want decent housing for our own members and their families. From much unsatisfactory experience we have had in attempting to get favorable action from Washington with respect to housing we know how little to expect from that source. European workers got things done for themselves because they knew what they wanted. Today workers in this country are learning that through collective effort they can improve their conditions of employment as well as their economic position. Tomorrow, through collective effort, Labor will by-pass the speculative operator and will obtain for itself decent housing in planned communities at a cost it can afford to pay.

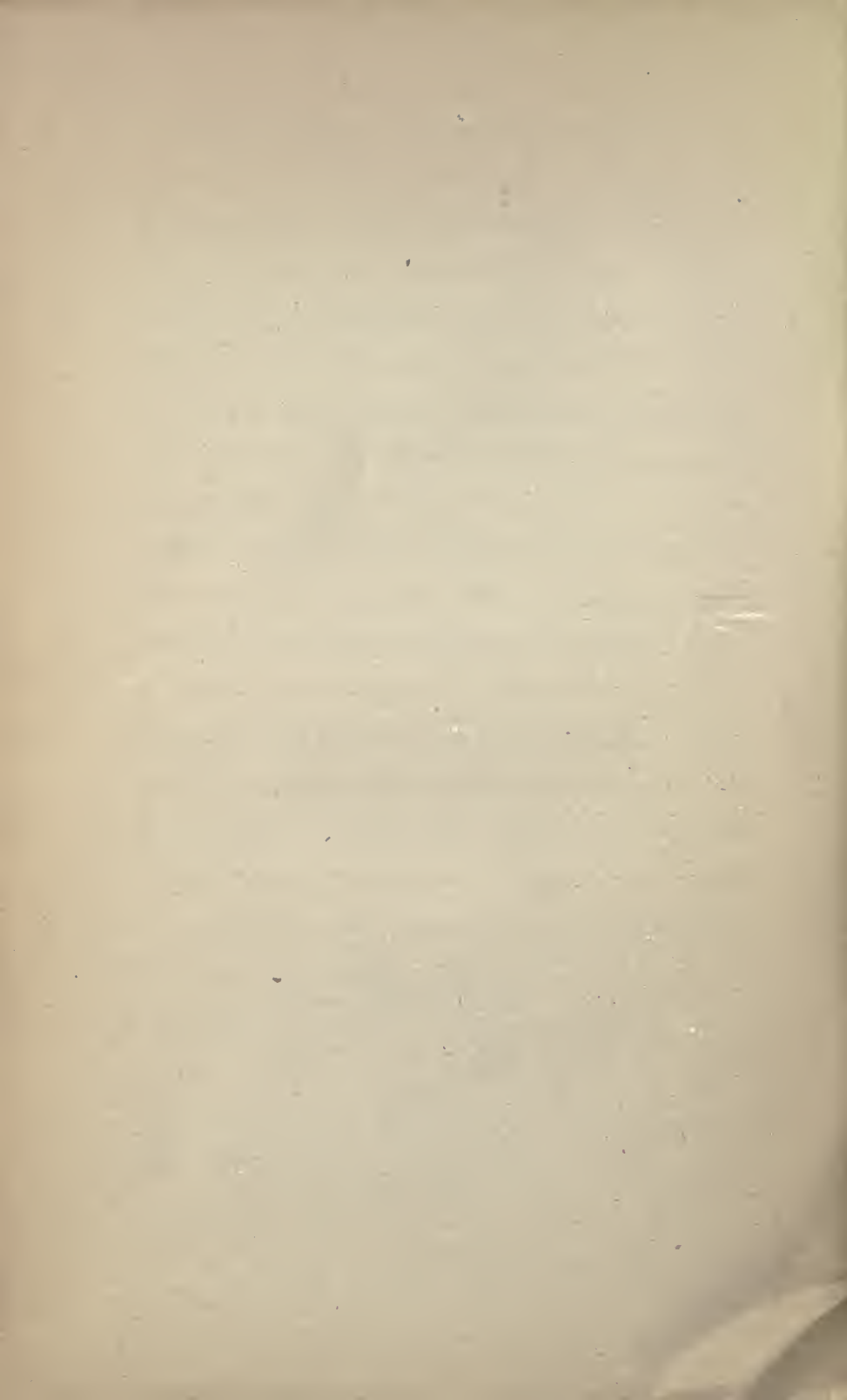
Handwritten signature of R. J. Thomas in cursive script.

President.

Handwritten signature of Geo. F. Eddie in cursive script.

Secretary-Treasurer

August 15, 1943



# INDUSTRY

# MANPOWER

# HOUSING

## **Industry**

Our industrial buildings are the finest in the world. The products being manufactured in these buildings are eagerly sought after in every part of the globe. Our leadership in mass production is well established. The quality of our machine tools is also recognized the world over. All the advantages that scientific research has to offer are today being utilized in the full development

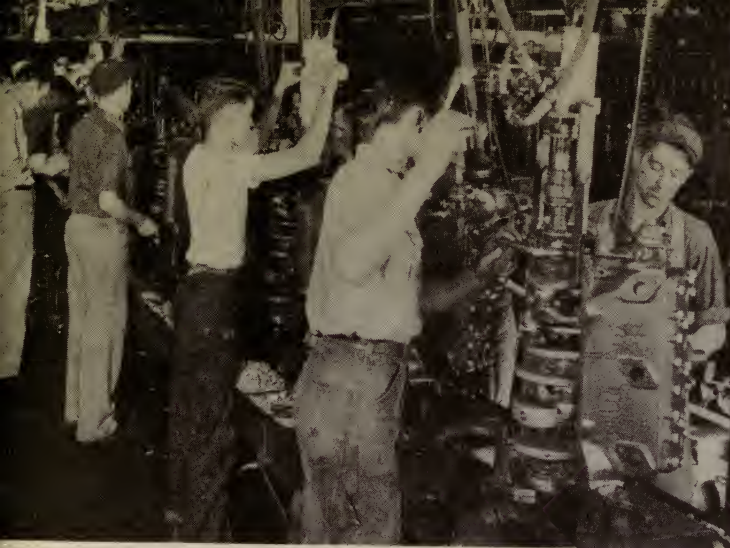




of our industrial resources. Furthermore, the workmen who are manning these industries and are guiding the machinery in attaining ever higher production records form the largest and most valuable group of skilled industrial workers in the world.

### **Manpower**

However, as important as are the products of our industrial system, the most important national asset of all is produced outside of our marvelous industrial plant, and under conditions that are as backward as our industries are progressive. **The chief purpose of organized society should be to produce a better crop of children.** Children who, when they grow up, will be the manpower of the nation. Unless this is so all of our other achievements are meaningless. **Housewives raising families form the largest occupational group in the population and are**



The men and women on all our  
production lines form the largest  
and most valuable group of skilled  
industrial workers in the world.





The most important unit in the American way of living is the family.

**also producing our most important national asset.** The importance of our manpower is never fully recognized until the country is at war and then it is generally too late to do much about it. As soon as the war is over the problem of manpower is once more dropped from national consideration.

**Study in  
Contrasts**

To the skilled mechanic who spends his working hours in a modern plant using scientific equipment, coming home after work must be quite a study in contrasts. Scientific skill and efficient management seem to belong exclusively to industry. It is a human tendency to take chronic ailments for granted until something happens to make the ailments critical. In a like manner the sorry plight of the housing situation has been taken

for granted by the public in general. Governing officials, because of pressure from selfish interest groups, do little to relieve the situation until drastic measures have to be taken to meet an emergency.

## **Home of the Worker**

After the war emergency has passed and conditions return to a more normal state the problem of decent housing will still be with us. Let us therefore turn our attention to some of the factors that have made housing such a problem. Let us examine what "home" offers to the average worker. To what does he return after a hard day at the shop and an inconvenient and excessively long ride home?

1. Does he find relaxation at home?
2. Is the street on which his house is located quiet and restful?
3. Is his house bright and cheerful?
4. Is his house squeezed in a narrow lot between two other houses?
5. Do his children have any other place to play than the street, where they are constantly exposed to traffic hazards?
6. Are there good light and ventilation in all rooms?
7. Does the kitchen window usually face the alley with its garbage cans or look into the neighbors' windows on the narrow side of the house?



Typical workers neighborhood.

Is this the American way of living?

How long can we afford to raise our families in such surroundings?

8. Does the living room side of the house get the street dust, noise, and gasoline odors?
9. Is his house so arranged that each member of the family can enjoy some measure of privacy without being disturbed by other members of the family?
10. Is there any space around the house where he and his family can enjoy relaxation in privacy under trees and the open sky?
11. Why should all of this that passes for housing take from 20% to 25% of his earnings?

The sad but undeniable truth is that the housing situation has become a blight, not only upon the war production program, but also upon our family lives. Just



Street casualties exceed war casualties.



as long as we continue to permit the most backward industry in the country to supply our housing needs we may expect nothing better.

Many progressive sociologists in this country are of the opinion that Labor can expect no real improvement in housing until it participates in the solution of that problem. **"It is the firm opinion of the author that there never will be any realistic housing movement in this country until the workers and consumers themselves take a hand in the solution of this problem."**—from "Modern Housing" by Catherine Bauer. The experience of Labor groups in European countries fully bears out this statement by Miss Bauer. Our own government housing agencies, while admitting the value of sug-

Catherine  
Bauer on  
Housing

gestions and principles advanced by Labor, repeatedly disregard Labor's recommendations in housing programs. No industry nor any of its agencies can long continue to prosper if it fails to recognize the needs of the people who will furnish a market for its products.

As far back as 400 B.C. the famous Greek philosopher Aristotle said, **"He who lives in a house is a better judge of its being a good or a bad one than the builder of it."** What Aristotle found to be true 2300 years ago is just as true today.

**Aristotle  
on Housing**

Nobody else has the same understanding of his family's needs as does the worker himself. But every agency, private or public, providing housing, has its own axe to grind. **The one who holds the purse strings dictates the kind of housing the worker gets. The only way the workers can control their living environment is to develop their own housing program.**

**Workers'  
Program**

## THE GROWTH OF CITIES AND THE DECLINE OF HOUSING

### **Industrial Expansion**

Ever since the industrial era set in and men began to leave the farm to find employment in factories located in or near the cities, housing has been a growing problem. With the growth of the cities the real estate interests stepped into the picture to take over the exploitation of the housing market. Farm land around the cities was parcelled out into plots and sold off to the public at enormous profits. In putting new subdivisions on the market the controlling factor was not the demand created by the possible future growth in population. As

### **Subdivision Expansion**

much property was put on the market as high pressure selling could dispose of. All that was necessary to put a new subdivision on the market was to lay some sidewalks, install street corner posts with romantic names on them, fly strings of brightly colored flags, and put on a big advertising campaign, and people would come running with their money, like moths that are attracted to a bright flame, and with the same results. The thousands of lots around our big cities that are being offered at "scavenger" sales are the marked graves where lie buried the hopes and savings of the gullible public that



was "taken for a ride" by slick speculators. These "scavenger" lots are only a small fraction of the total and unwarranted expansion in subdivisions that the public paid for. As a result of these practices the name "real estate operator" became so unpopular with the public that real estate organizations have attempted to remove some of the stigma from their operations by calling themselves "Realtors." **The net result of all of this real estate boom has been to victimize the public and to leave the housing situation to continue to deteriorate.** To sum up, the process is something like this:

- Industry locates in or near the city and expands.
- People flock from the country and the small towns into the city to get work in expanding industry.
- To accommodate the influx of workers some of the older residential sections of the city start to divide up the large, old houses into rent barracks. In these made-over houses each separate room will often accommodate an entire family.
- Room overcrowding leads logically to bed overcrowding and lack of sanitary facilities. The many examples of "hot beds" near war plants are a logical development of this process.
- Next enters the speculative operator with his new "jerry built" houses and flats, in which he standard-

izes overcrowding and shoddy construction.

- Human beings are often forced to live in surroundings that are unfit for pigs, in order that they may be near their employment.
- Block after block of dreary streets, bleak alleys, absence of open space for children to play, lack of garden space, lack of community planning. Trees are a luxury.
- Overcrowding also brings with it infection and disease-carrying pests such as rats, that carry plague; bed-bugs, that spread typhus, and flies, that visit garbage cans and other filth and infants' milk bottles with equal impartiality.
- That the working classes could raise families in such surroundings and keep their children from physical and moral debasement is a tribute to their character.
- Industry expands still further and moves outside the city to get more space and to escape city taxes.
- Real estate speculators obtain control of all land around factories and divide it up into small parcels repeating all of the bad practices that cause city congestion.
- As the area begins to build up undesirable living conditions again become evident. Although the



A Gas Station, Stores or Excessive Traffic and an Otherwise Good Neighborhood Begins to Deteriorate.

crowding is not so bad as it was before, loose restrictions permit encroaching, non-conforming uses of land. **A corner gas station, a few stores, or excessive traffic contribute to the decline of the neighborhood.**

- In spite of the fact that this process has been going on all over the country private speculative building enterprise can see nothing wrong with its methods. It is significant that these interests, which so successfully opposed and delayed the adoption of zoning laws for land-use control, now think that the government should confine its housing activities to the clearing of slums. **The first thing to do in connection with the clearing of slums is to stop building what, in a few years, will be more slums. Most of the speculative house building done today—with the approval of governmental agencies—will be the blighted areas of tomorrow.**

## SPECULATIVE BUILDING

### The Construction Industry

Before we take up proposals for a Labor program let us look further into the system that has brought about present conditions. It is a significant fact that the construction industry is divided into two general parts:

#### Section 1

One section consisting of general builders and subcontractors, mostly men who are technically trained, are well established, and have reputations for competence and integrity. From the ranks of these operators are drawn the builders of our industrial plants and better buildings. These men do not, as a rule, participate in housebuilding or any other speculative operation.

#### Section 2.

**The second section of the building industry is the speculative group. It is this group that does most of the housebuilding.** This group is made up very largely of real estate operators, land speculators, a large number of small building tradesmen of limited financial means who are as a rule backed by building material supply firms, and a large number of miscellaneous speculative operators with get-rich-quick schemes, who flit from one speculative venture to another. **The dominating motive behind this entire group is to "make a killing while it lasts."**

As a result of the methods of the speculative oper-



ator the conscientious builder finds it very difficult to remain in business, and is usually forced to do one of two things:

- a. He is forced out of business altogether, or
- b. He is forced to adopt the speculator's methods and to lower his own building standards.

**The  
Speculative  
Builder**

Speculative building operations have brought with them two general, destructive elements:

- a. Bad planning; shoddy and borderline materials
- b. Excessive costs and overselling.

Growing out of these two features are a host of lesser factors which can usually be found in connection with speculative operations:

1. Inefficient operations.
2. Unscientific planning.
3. Obsolete street patterns.
4. Lack of recreation areas.
5. Traffic hazards.
6. Congestion and noise.
7. Lack of privacy.
8. Spotty development.
9. Lack of community facilities.
10. Lack of proper relationship between buildings.
11. Encroaching of non-conforming land uses.
12. Improper building restrictions.

13. Lack of landscaping.
14. Shoddy materials and workmanship.
15. Rapid obsolescence.
16. High upkeep.
17. High land price markup.
18. Multiplication of selling commissions and fees.
19. High pressure selling.
20. Improper financing.
21. Heavy advertising costs.
22. Speculative coverage.
23. Emphasis on selling gadgets.

In addition to the foregoing factors the further fact that most home buying sprees have occurred during boom times and that the obligations incurred depended on a continuation of boom time earnings, have conspired to make home ownership very hazardous and unsatisfactory. The depreciation in value of a home has frequently been greater than the reduction of the mortgage, causing many home owners to lose their investment after they had paid in large amounts of money. **It is to the everlasting discredit of private enterprise that housing, an essential factor in human existence, has been made the object of such conscienceless exploitation.**

## HOME — WHAT IS IT?

**Housing—  
In Whose  
Interest?**

"Housing" is a simple word that we have been hearing a lot of recently. However, the word "housing" means different things to different groups. To private enterprise it is just one way of making profit. To speculative builders it is an easy way to exploit the needs of workers. To loaning institutions it is a sure way of collecting large interest rates. Owners of rental housing property, banks, insurance companies, and others holding mortgages on existing property, feel that they must keep a close watch on the expansion of housebuilding so that it will not endanger the value of their holdings and equities in existing property. **The interests of those who are to occupy these houses are given very little, if any, consideration.** Housing that is now available to most workers and their families consists largely of a roof overhead and a place to hang their hats.

**Home and  
the  
Individual**

Home is the place where every member of the family spends the greater part of his or her lifetime. It is the place where the new-born baby is raised and the center of a child's activities through his growing

years. It is in the neighborhood where the child plays with other children after coming home from school. **The home and the neighborhood have a large part in shaping the character of the man or woman the child will grow up to be.** Our grandparents have settled our heredity for us, but in the raising of families environment is just as important as heredity. The environment in which families are raised today imposes severe handicaps on the parents and children. It is time that we were able to control our environment to the degree that the farmer is able to control the environment of his livestock. **"Proper housing is an important factor in the successful raising of hogs. If little pigs are to get the right kind of a start in life they must have plenty of sunshine."**—From U. S. Government Farmers Bulletin No. 1487.

## Home and Family

The home is important, not only to the growing child, but likewise to every member of the family. To the housewife and mother, who spends from two-thirds to nearly all of her time at home. To the family, because most of the functions of family life center in and around the home. The health, comfort, social and civic life of the family are centered in the home. **In the home is rooted our way of life.**

**Home and  
Community**

The community also has a large stake in our homes. More land area is taken up for the construction of homes than for any other building types. Residential property contributes more than half of all real estate taxes. **There is no more important function for the community than the protection of its homes and families.**

**Escape**

The degree to which homes as we now know them have failed to fulfill their proper function is very forcibly underlined by the eagerness with which we all seek to escape from them. When looking for recreation or relief from congestion the family will often drive many miles over roads crowded with thousands of other families on a similar hunt, all in search of open space where it is quiet and where there are a few trees and a bit of open sky. It is pathetic that nature offers us her finest gifts free of cost, but that they have been so mutilated by speculative enterprise in its greedy reach for "bigger and better" profits, that we must travel miles to be able to enjoy them.

**The growing popularity of recreation opportunities away from the home is clear evidence of the desire to run away from conditions that, at present, are not satisfactory.**



## POST-WAR HOUSING

In appraising the opportunities in the post-war period we note a rising volume of publicity that clearly reveals the part speculative builders expect to play in the home building field. Selling campaigns have already been started in various forms. The alarming feature of much of what is being proposed, however, is the fact that the housebuilding industry is apparently ready to pick up again where it left off, completely oblivious to all of its errors of the past. Although there is considerable talk of what the government should do to bail out vested interests in the clearing up of slums, the building of new houses by speculative enterprise on the old, obsolete patterns will mean that the basis for slums is being laid at a rate with which rehabilitation can never keep pace. It will be like attempting to bail water from a sinking ship with a sieve before attempting to plug the holes in the hull.

**Speculators'**  
**Postwar**  
**Opportunity**

The speculative house building and real estate interests are looking with great anticipation toward the post-war period to repeat their profits of former boom years. These interests look upon individual workers as a large and fertile field to exploit. We have just witnessed examples of the savage opposition of these

interests to the construction by the government of housing for war workers, even where the absence of sufficient housing facilities caused war production to bog down. The resulting lack of vital supplies and equipment in sufficient quantities has already slowed down military and naval operations, thereby lengthening the duration of the war and causing the unnecessary sacrifice of the lives of thousands of our boys, to say nothing of the needless wasting of billions of dollars. No better illustration can show the callous disregard of speculative operators for the national interest when their potential profits are concerned.

**Patriotism!**

**Labor as a  
Post-War  
Market**

The factors that cause the speculative house building industry to look upon Labor with such anticipation as a post-war market are as follows:

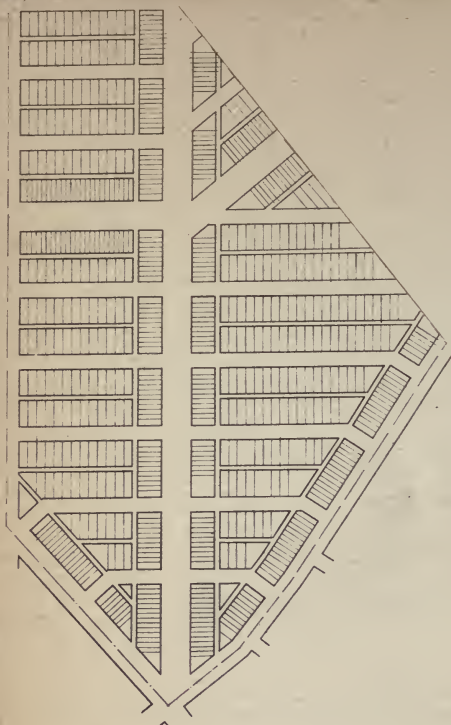




1. Workers are earning increased wages.
2. Workers are paying up their debts.
3. Workers are buying war bonds.
4. Workers are increasing their savings accounts.
5. Many workers have experienced great difficulty in getting decent housing during the war period.
6. Housebuilding has been curtailed during the period of the war emergency.
7. There has been an accumulated deterioration of existing houses.
8. The number of families has increased enormously.
9. The national birth-rate has risen sharply.

The reference often made in periodicals to the draining off of the workers' surplus money and assets is no mere figure of speech. Whatever may be the merits



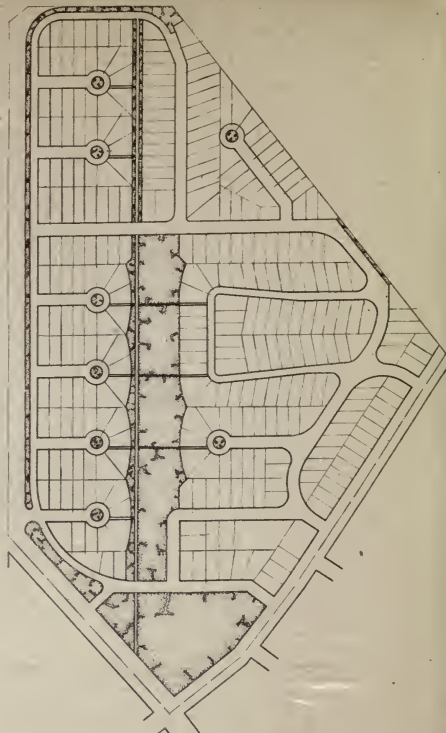


**Typical speculative subdivision of 708 lots sold for approximately \$1400 per lot.**

1. Main highway cuts thru middle of subdivision
2. All streets open to thru traffic hazards
3. Narrow lots with alleys at rear
4. Lack of privacy, noisy, congested
4. Monotonous street patterns
6. No recreation areas
7. Encroaching non conforming land uses
8. No provision for community facilities
9. Expensive street development
10. Business frontage that can never be used but will always blight the neighborhood.

**SUMMARY**

Planned for maximum exploitation. Not a fit place to live. Will deteriorate rapidly and will be a blighted area before it is entirely built up. Wastes private and public money. Will be a financial burden to the city.



**The same land replatted for planned community with 312 lots and 13 acres for parks and community buildings, cost per lot approximately \$164.**

1. Main highway detoured to one side of community
2. Streets so arranged as to serve this community only—no thru traffic
3. Large lots, no alleys
4. Maximum privacy, adequate light and air
5. Pleasant and healthful living environment
6. Easy access to parks and playgrounds
7. Protected against encroachment
8. Generous space for community activities
9. Economical street system
10. Shopping area restricted for convenience and protection of community.

**SUMMARY**

Replanned for decent, safe, healthful living. An attractive place for children and adults to live. Will save city money in upkeep and reduced city services. Sound social and economic investment.

**NOTE**

New street pattern determined by being required to make maximum use of existing utilities.



HOUSING PROJECT  
LINTON PARK MICH  
OTIS WINN  
ARCHITECT  
FEBRU 1934

100' x 100' 1/2

of this procedure to check inflation, the same process will also be used in the post-war period to exploit the workers' needs. **If Labor wants to avoid being exploited it will, of necessity, have to make its own plans for the post-war period.** That planning can very profitably start now. Unless this planning is done now we will have a repetition of other boom periods with all of their undesirable features repeated all over again.

### Remedies

Having listed some of the characteristics of speculative operation so as to give some idea of what must be avoided let us now turn our attention toward a positive program. We have seen that most of the past and present bad housing results from two main causes:

- a) Bad planning; shoddy and borderline materials.
- b) Excessive cost and overselling.

We shall now show that these two fundamental causes can be eliminated and corrected by the building of homes in **planned communities thru collective action.**

As individuals we are powerless to make any material changes in a system that has become chronic and that is supported by well entrenched interests which have been very effective in the past in blocking any changes that might cut into the profits that they have come to consider as rightfully theirs. However, workers today, through their Union organizations, have some

extremely valuable assets which, if they are brought to bear on the problem of housing, can accomplish very great improvement in the entire field of operation. Let us now consider these assets further.

**Collective  
Action**

Workers everywhere have learned what they can accomplish thru collective action. **By collective action they can free themselves completely from the necessity of dealing with speculative operators. By collective action they can acquire for themselves all of the advantages to be gained through building in planned communities.**

**Mass  
Market**

**Workers, thru their Unions, have the tremendous advantage of an organized mass market.** This makes it possible to gain the savings to be made from mass production, mass purchasing, pre-fabrication, and large scale, continuous operation and other technological advances. Thru mass purchasing it will be possible to obtain better quality equipment instead of the minimum quality that has become standard. For example, in heating equipment, instead of using the competitive line of furnaces and accessories, the principal asset of which is a low selling price, by mass purchasing it will be possible to buy the better quality of equipment at the low cost or even at a lower cost than the competitive line is usually sold for in smaller quan-



Articulate  
Leadership

tities. This one illustration will apply equally to many other products.

**Articulate  
Leadership**

Workers today have intelligent leaders of their own choosing, who are continually studying all factors that affect the lives of workers and their families. That leadership stands ready to guide the activities of groups whose members are interested in home ownership, so as to take full advantage of all technological advances and to advise local groups against continuing to build or to buy homes in obsolete patterns that can only lead to future slum areas.

**Private  
Enterprise**

We intend to accomplish radical improvement in the home building industry for our own membership. We propose to do so through the employment of the best features of private enterprise. **However, there is**

Design for living.

- No thru streets
- Safe access to park
- Open planning



**absolutely no place in our plans for the speculative operation that has plagued the home building industry in the past.** Nor is there any place in our operations for the use of shoddy or borderline materials or workmanship.

### **General**

### **Considerations**

Workers have come to realize that the building of houses alone does not solve the housing problem. The housing problem concerns itself, not only with the houses themselves, but also with the manner in which a man and his family live. The speculative builder completely disregards this fact. In the UAW-CIO the worker now has an organization that is sufficiently interested in his well-being and the well-being of his family to make it possible for him to seek something better. Up to now he has not been shown that a home

in a planned community was within his reach. Although he is quite well aware of some examples of high-priced suburban residential developments these have always been far beyond his means. In fact much of the over-buying of property in the past has been in a futile effort to provide a few of these advantages for a man's family.

**Planned  
Communities**

Up until the present time providing housing merely meant the building of more houses. That this is not a solution to the problem is evident, because after building houses for years we are today worse off than we were before. Not only must we build more houses today, but in addition we must rebuild and restore many areas already built up, and we find that this must be done in order that past blunders will be corrected. **There will be no proper approach made to the solution of the housing problem until we begin to think in terms of how a family lives and in terms of communities.** Many good houses have been abandoned simply because the neighborhood in which they are located has so deteriorated as to be no longer desirable to live in.

The rapidly changing character of residential areas of our cities comes about because of the attempt of people who live in these areas to escape from neigh-



borhood decay by running away to some new area. The new area generally is located farther away from the city but the street patterns and lot arrangements are the same as in the older sections. There is also present in these new areas the same lack of foresight in providing for community facilities. At first the new area is quite open. Gradually, however, as the building-up process begins to rob the area of much of its open space the growing congestion begins to make the new area just as undesirable as the former and, before a man has had a chance to pay off the obligation on his home, he finds that it is no longer a desirable place in which to live and that his property has depreciated greatly in value. At the very time when he should be able to sit back and really enjoy living in a paid-up home he finds himself compelled to pull up stakes and to start all over again. This process is in operation all around us and is responsible for the large areas of our cities that are blighted. Now instead of running away from a problem we cannot escape anyway, let us face the facts and attempt to solve the problem by developing communities in which desirable living features are provided and in which the causes for future decay are kept out. **The most effective means we possess that will enable us to achieve our purpose is collective action.**



By means of collective action we can accomplish the following:

1. Conduct scientific studies for the proper selection and use of land.
2. Obtain low land costs through large scale purchase.
3. Employ competent technical skill for scientific planning.
4. Change obsolete street patterns to provide modern superblock areas.
5. Plan for the motor age by separating automobile

from pedestrian traffic for safety.

6. Reduce construction costs thru large scale operation and purchasing.
7. Select materials and equipment for efficient use.
8. Select materials for low cost of upkeep rather than for low first cost.
9. Maintain good living standards in planning, rather than minimum standards that will "get by."
10. Provide adequate light and air.
11. Plan so as to take advantage of solar orientation and prevailing winds.
12. Place homes in relation to each other so as to avoid crowding.
13. Plan for more privacy and less noise throughout community.
14. Maintain complete control of development.
15. Reduce obsolescence.
16. Eliminate speculative costs.
17. Eliminate sales commissions.
18. Provide adequate adjoining park and recreation areas for all age groups.
19. Encourage community activities.
20. Create a pleasant healthy, and living environment.
21. Safeguard investment in property.



Group meetings in community centers keep wives and mothers up to date on many subjects.

22. Develop landscaping to enhance appearance of property.

It becomes obvious that, if a community development includes all of the features listed above, such a development will, after twenty years, be enhanced in value. Instead of running away from it, its occupants will be enjoying it more and more. The landscaping will have matured, the mortgages on the houses will have been either completely paid off or very nearly so, and each home owner will have a piece of very valuable property. Now contrast this with the greatly run-down, deteriorated condition of twenty-year-old neighborhoods with which we are all familiar.

**The interesting thing to note is that, in the build-**

ing of well planned communities thru collective action, we not only show a decided savings in first cost, but, what is even more important, we shall obtain a product of much higher quality and in a much better setting than has been possible in the past. The most pathetic part of the usual home purchase thru the regular channels is the extremely shoddy quality of the product. This is even worse than the excessive price that has been paid. It is a very common occurrence to have a family make a down payment on a house under the influence of a smooth-tongued, fast-talking salesman and, as soon as they move in, to have them begin to find glossed over defects and a lack of necessary details.

**Collective action**, then, makes it possible to buy a better product for less money. Since that product concerns all members of the family in their every-day living and the purchase of a home often constitutes the largest single financial transaction a worker makes in his lifetime, too much attention cannot be devoted to making that purchase proper and intelligent. From what has already been stated here it must be very evident, therefore, that the usual practice of buying

a lot for future development in a conventional subdivision—no matter how glowingly it is described in the real estate folders—is the worst kind of foolishness. Although non-union workers may have to continue to buy their homes in the same old way the UAW-CIO member, thru his Union, has a better way.

When we speak of the planned community we mean the inclusion of a great deal more than is offered by the type of home development where certain restrictions are enforced or where one or two builders have built up an entire section. Our use of the term "**planned community**" includes not only the building of houses in a proper relation to each other but also the providing of adjoining park and recreation areas that meet the needs of different age groups and that can be reached easily without exposure to traffic hazards; the proper relating of these communities to places of work; the setting aside or making provision for the development of local shopping centers in such a way as to serve the residents of the community but still leave the houses protected; the providing of space for present and future community buildings, schools, day nurseries, and health centers; these provisions within

a land pattern that keeps out thru vehicular traffic—in short, all of those factors which make for complete and satisfactory community living.

While it is not usually possible to erect buildings for all community activities at the time that a planned community is being started we do strongly urge that the nucleus of a community building be included at the beginning. Most appropriate for that nucleus would be the child care wing and an adult meeting room. The proper operation of a child care unit can be of inestimable benefit to both children and parents alike. It is very important however that sufficient land—not just a few lots—properly located be set aside to take care of possible future community requirements. We are all familiar with instances where communities have been forced to pay exorbitant prices for inadequate pieces of land only because of lack of foresight in the original platting of the land.

The advantages of such planned communities together with the possibility of achieving them thru collective effort having been set forth, let us pass to a specific program of action.

*Do you want this?*



*or this*



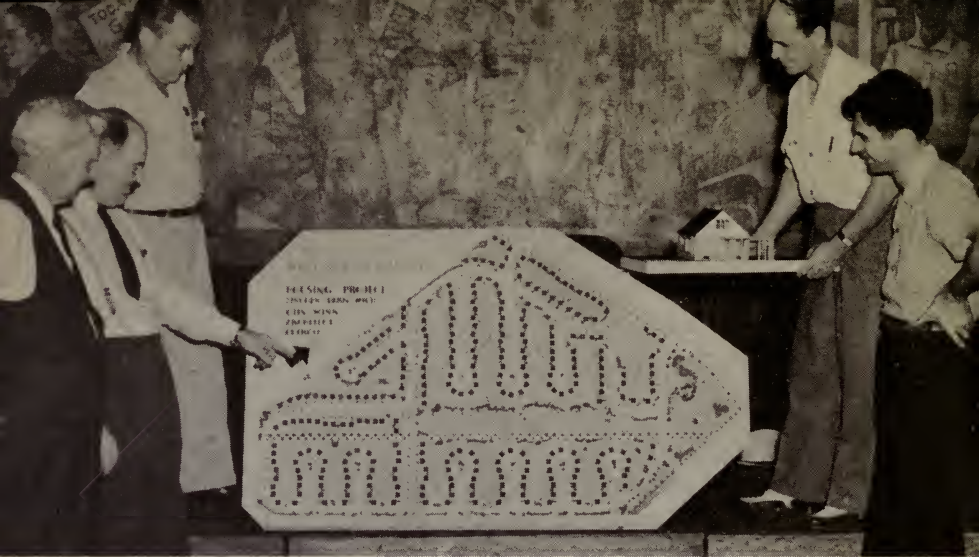


## ORGANIZING FOR COLLECTIVE ACTION

### **The Program**

The initiative for action must come from the individual members in the Local Union. If you are interested in home ownership in a planned community start the ball rolling by having your Local Union appoint a Housing Committee, if it does not already have one. It will be the duty of this committee to collect information on which to base its recommendations for further action. Your International is ready and anxious to assist your Local groups in formulating your program, but until you have a Housing Committee in your Local your International has no way of making contact with the membership. In organizing for action the following steps are suggested.

1. The Local Union appoints a Housing Committee for the purpose of studying all phases of housing.
2. One of the duties of this Housing Committee shall be to present to the Local Union membership the International's program for the post-war building of homes in planned communities in which individual Union members can participate.
3. Having presented this program to the Local



Membership the Housing Committee shall make inquiries among the members to determine the degree of desire of the members to participate in such a program.

4. If, on the basis of the information collected, the Housing Committee is satisfied that there is a sufficient, active demand for participation in the program a meeting of those interested shall be called, in order that the formulating of a definite program of action can begin. At this stage, if the Housing Committee requests it, the International will send a qualified representative to meet with the group, explain the program in greater detail, answer questions, and assist your Local in organizing for action.
5. Based upon extensive studies conducted by your

International the following further steps are recommended:

- a. After the group has heard the program explained and decides to proceed, it should first elect a Building Committee made up from the Local Union members who will participate in the program.
- b. The Building Committee should have **limited authority** to make preliminary investigations, tentative selection of possible building sites, engaging of technical assistants to make studies of suggested use of land, types of buildings, preliminary estimates of cost, necessary contacts with financing agencies and the various civic departments concerned with the proposed project. This work will, of course, entail some cost. Therefore the participating members will be required to pay a small preliminary fee (the amount to be determined by the Building Committee) to enable this work to be done properly.
- c. Upon completion of the preliminary studies the findings of the Building Committee are to be submitted to the participating group for revision and approval. The final approval

and acceptance of all proposals are to rest with the group. If, after acceptance of a program by the majority of the group, some members find that their requirements are not met by the program as approved by the majority or if, for any reason whatever, any members want to withdraw from participation, they are entirely free to do so.

**Post-War  
Action**

- d. It is highly desirable and advantageous to the UAW members who are contemplating home ownership that all possible steps in the preliminary development of these planned communities be taken now during the war period. However the final step of forming the permanent organization that will have full authority to approve and accept preliminary work and to enter into all necessary contracts for the final development and construction of the communities should be left until the end of the war.

Inasmuch as the success of the entire undertaking is largely dependent upon the steps that must now be taken, it is of the utmost importance that your Building Committee work in the closest harmony with

the International Housing Director, as only thru such close cooperation can you profit by the experience and technical knowledge which will enable you to get the maximum beneficial results from your program.

- e. In the carrying out of this program it is contemplated that the most advantageous financing arrangements available at the time of development will be utilized. At the present time a down-payment of at least 10% of the purchase price of the house and land is required to enable the buyer to obtain a deed to his property. The time at which this down-payment shall be made and the amount to be paid by each member will be determined by your own Building Committee. Variations from this procedure may be advisable because of local conditions. In that event your Building Committee will work out a satisfactory program. Should other financing plans become available with more attractive features, or should you decide to use other financing arrangements, there is nothing in this program to prevent you from doing so.
- f. For those Union members who want to buy



Supervised care  
of children of  
working mothers

homes in planned communities but who do not have sufficient cash to make the required down payment, the following plan is suggested. Inasmuch as actual construction during the war period is not possible the individual member can make good use of this period to set aside money regularly for this purpose. The Building Committees are urged to help their members along by making arrangements with their Local Union Treasurer or with a local bank so that these installment deposits will be accepted and held for this purpose only. No strings should be attached

to these savings plans and the Union member should be free to withdraw his money at any time. Your International cannot urge you too strongly or too often to start your program going at the earliest possible date. You cannot start too soon to make plans but you can lose much by delaying action.

- g. If the community is developed, the preliminary fee previously paid by each participating individual member will constitute a part of his down payment. To those who have paid the preliminary fee but have withdrawn from the participating group their money will be re-

Healthful environment makes for happy family life



turned. In the event that the project is not carried through to completion the cost of the development of the preliminary studies will be deducted and the balance of the preliminary fee will be refunded to the members.

- h. After a member has made his down payment and has obligated himself to purchase a home under this program there is nothing to prevent him from selling his property should he for any reason desire to do so. The sale of the house, however, must be subject to whatever rules and regulations are set up by the group.
- j. **The freedom of action and choice is always with the Local group.**

### **A Word of Caution**

As soon as this program for the development of planned communities by the collective action of UAW members is released, you may confidently expect to be approached by real estate operators, builders, and others, who will make attractive sounding offers to you. As bait, much of this will take the form of services offered to you free of charge and with apparently no strings attached. **So that you may not become involved in commitments that may later prove unwise your International recommends that the Housing Director have the opportunity to analyze any proposals made to you**



**and to give you the benefit of his experience and of the technical resources available to him.**

Exact figures on savings to be made through this method of operation which we have outlined for you cannot be given in a way that will cover all cases. Each development can be analyzed on its own merits. That money savings can be made by this method of operation is obvious even if you consider only the savings to be made thru the **elimination of selling commissions, speculative coverage and mass purchasing**: However, as important as is the saving in first cost the chief advantage of the type of development we are advocating lies in another direction.

Homes for workers have been and are now being built by speculative operators on obsolete patterns. The houses are built in unprotected neighborhoods whose value cannot hold up for long and they are built as cheaply as possible. To get the selling cost down and keep profits up borderline and shoddy materials are used. The standards of planning, materials and workmanship are the lowest that will "get by." In fact the speculative builders' "bible" is the "minimum construction requirements." The logical results of this sort of construction to the home buyer are high upkeep costs, early deterioration and excessively rapid depre-

**Quality  
Products**

ciation. But that is not all. The mortgage company finds that in order to make economically sound loans on this type of property the number of years the mortgage has to run must be kept short and the interest rates charged must be relatively high. In this way the home buyer gets caught coming and going. **The principal value to be derived from participation in this program is not only the savings in first cost but the greatly improved product that will result.** The International recognizes that thousands of UAW members will be buying homes immediately after the war. If they do not buy them collectively thru their Union they will buy them individually from speculative operators on whatever terms that are available to them.

In formulating this program your International wants to impress upon each and every Union member that this procedure is in no way a means of **getting something for nothing.** There is no manner of subsidy



Proper child care  
for

- Healthy bodies
- Healthy minds



connected with any part of the operation. In order to participate each Union member will pay his own way in the same manner as he would for any other purchase he makes of his own free will. **There is neither magic nor mystery in housing. Only by the proper application of modern organization combined with scientific study will the housing problem arrive at a proper solution.** The aim of the International in starting this program is to insure its Union members of getting full value for the money they spend for housing and of making their choice wisely. That is why we cannot stress too strongly the importance of collective effort. **Collective action is the only sure way we have that will make it**



HEALTHY LIVING

**possible to build houses in planned communities and to avoid exploitation.**

**Union  
Prestige**

In participating in the building of planned communities workers will be helping themselves to acquire sound home ownership and also, through the creating of stable neighborhoods, the individual UAW member will be helping to build up the strength and prestige of his Union by leading the way in the development of better living and better citizenship.

**Sniping at  
Program**

As the program develops you may be sure that it will be closely watched by many groups other than those interested in sound home ownership. You may expect that the sniping at this program will start very



## N PLANNED COMMUNITY

early. Many vested interests will feel themselves and their holdings threatened. Obviously because the speculative type of operation is being eliminated there will be heard much noise from this branch of the industry. If past performance is any gauge this group will also enlist the noise making facilities of many so-called respectable business organizations that might better be known as the "red herring brigade." You may expect to hear your program for sound home ownership called "un-American."

Thru the building of planned communities large sections of the public will become dissatisfied with the houses that are being offered on the speculative

open market. Many prospective home buyers outside the Union membership who do not have the organization to enable them to act collectively will find that, even though they are willing to spend much more money, planned communities of the type we propose will not be available to them.

**March of  
Progress**

Progressive action in the homebuilding industry is long overdue. In any progressive movement the reactionaries always act as a brake on progress. Our successful industries have won world leadership because of their readiness to adopt the best scientific thought available. Millions of dollars worth of good machinery is constantly being scrapped because newer and better devices are being developed. Those operators who develop hardening of the mental arteries and so do not keep up with the march of progress soon become stragglers who must learn to catch up or they will be left behind. In the application of large scale planning, organization, and scientific procedure to the field of housing we are advocating the same methods that have made our mass production industries world famous.

The successful development of the planned communities proposed will constitute the most progressive contribution toward sound home ownership of a quality to match our best industrial products. The success of

**PRELIMINARY STUDY OF A PLANNED  
COMMUNITY FOR WORKERS**



**COMMUNITIES THRU COLLECTIVE ACTION**

developments of this character is very largely dependent upon the thoroughness with which all phases of the program are worked out. This is in sharp contrast to speculative operations where the planning is negligible. Getting ready for planned communities requires much careful planning for the best results. In getting ready to manufacture a new product the "tooling up" process is very important and takes considerable time and work. In a like manner preliminary steps involved in working out the details for a planned community take a lot of time and must be done very carefully. **Your International, therefore, urges that those of you who are thinking of home ownership in the post-war period begin to plan for it now. The more carefully your program is worked out the more successful it will be.**

**Do It Now**



Prepared under the direction and supervision of R. J. Thomas, International President; George F. Addes, International Secretary-Treasurer of the UAW-CIO and Director of the War Policy Division. Appreciation is herewith given to William G. Nicholas, Otis Winn and Philip Brezner for many exhaustive hours of research work and for compilation of the facts as they have been presented.

Your comments, suggestions and requests for additional information on proposals contained herein are solicited and should be forwarded to the War Policy Division, UAW-CIO, Housing Department, 411 W. Milwaukee, Detroit, Michigan.



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